

Jan: 25th 1829

316 Market

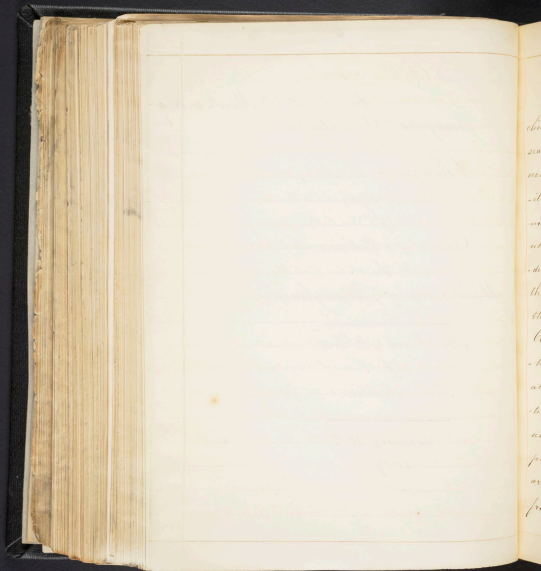
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No 140

By David March 6. 1829
Inaugural Dissertation
On
Cholera & Morbus;
For the degree
Of
Doctor of Medicine.
In the
University of Pennsylvania.

By David M. Fort
Of
Pennsylvania.

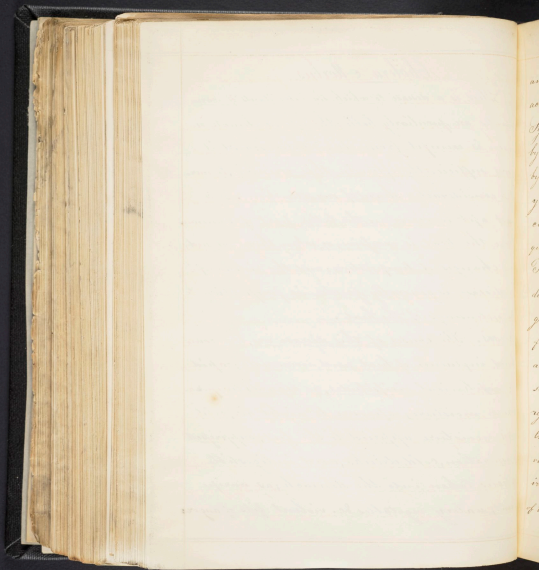
January 20th.
1829.



Cholera & Morbus.

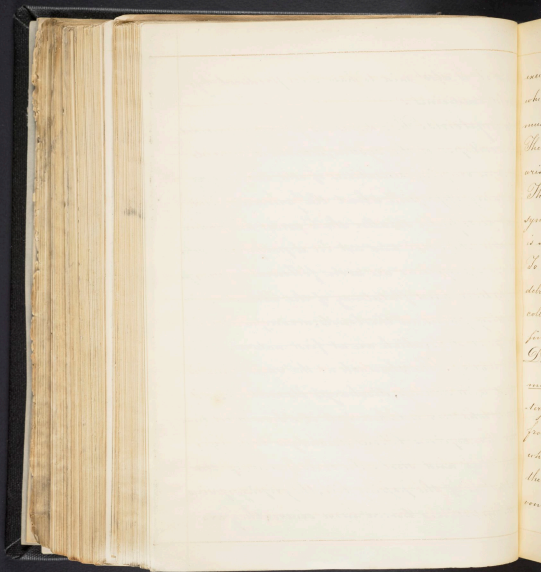
This is a disease to which the inhabitants of warm climates are peculiarly liable; though no climate or season is exempt from its visitations; and it occurs sufficiently often in this country, to merit a considerable share of our attention. It is most apt to occur in the latter part of summer, when the heat is excessive, or when there are sudden changes of temperature; and the violence of the disease is generally greater in proportion to the intenseness of the heat.

Causes. The causes of this disease are, the combined influence of heat and miasmata; rapid atmospheric vicissitudes, as regards temperature or moisture; exposure to night air, cold and moisture applied to the feet; suppressed perspiration, cold drinks, and indigestible articles taken into the stomach; as unripe fruit, watery vegetables &c. violent fits of anger;



and it is also said to have been produced by
acid medicines.

Symptoms. This disease is generally preceded
by a collapse of the system, which is witnessed
by some eruping sensations of cold attended by
yawning, oppression about the precordia, and
cold feet; pulse smaller than usual and rather
quicker, skin cool and not in a perspirable state.
These symptoms are soon followed by sickness,
distention and flatulency of the abdomen, with
gripping pains in the bowels, accompanied with
frequent stools, which are at first natural, or thin
and watery. The stomach at the same time is
sized with sickness, discharges its contents, and
rejects whatever is taken into it. In a short time
there are copious bilious discharges both by
vomiting and stool. In consequence of the
irritation of the passing bile, the gripping pains
of the intestines become more severe; they are

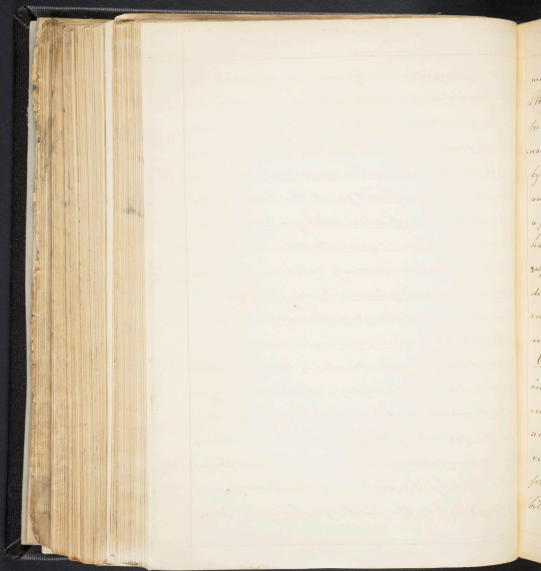


excited to irregular and spasmodic contractions,
which are often communicated to the abdominal
muscles, and to the muscles of the lower extremities. ✓
There is pain and great heat in the stomach,
arising probably from the same cause.

There is intense thirst; and the head is often
sympathetically affected with pain; the pulse
is small and frequent, and the skin hot.

To these symptoms succeed extreme languor,
debility and faintings, sometimes attended with
copious sweats, coldness of the extremities; and ✓
finally, death.

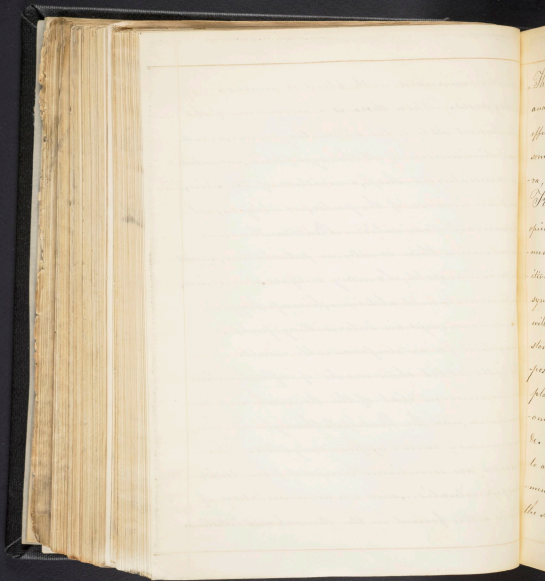
Diagnosis. The only diseases with which cholera
morbida is liable to be confounded, are colic, dysen-
tery, and diarrhoea. It may be distinguished
from the former, by the absence of constipation,
which almost always attends colic, and from
the two latter, by the violence of the spasms, and
vomiting; and by the discharges being bilious,



matter mixed with blood or mucus.

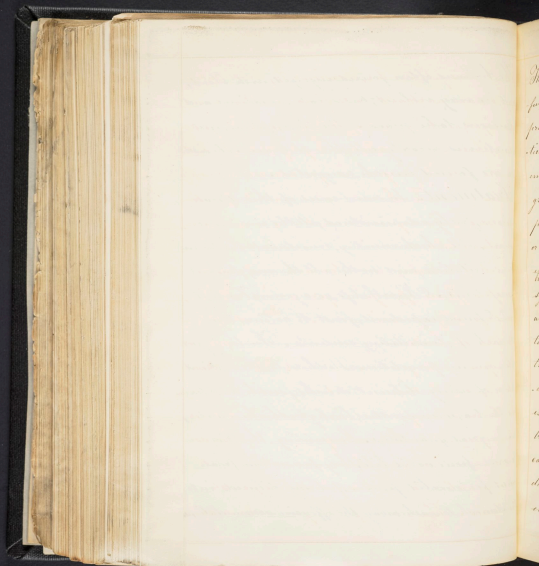
Prognosis. When there is a subsidence of the turbulent state of the alimentary canal, a gradual diminution of all the symptoms, succeeded by undisturbed sleep, a moisture of the skin, and an increase of the pulse, we may expect a favourable termination. But on the other hand, when there is extreme perturbation, hurried respiration, cold, clammy surface, convulsions, delirium, tumid abdomen, hiccups, haggard countenance, and an intermitting pulse, we may look for an unfavourable result.

Dissections show marks of inflammation in the mucous coat of the stomach and duodenum, and the blood-vessels throughout the alimentary canal appear congested. The viscera are sometimes removed from their proper situation, and an accumulation of bile is often found in the stomach and intestines.

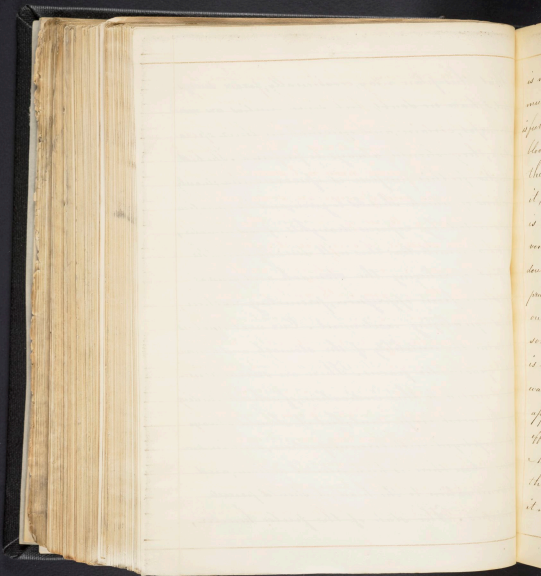


The brain is often found engorged with blood, and in very violent cases extravasations and effusions take place. The liver, spleen, and sometimes nearly all the abdominal viscera, are found much congested.

Treatment. In some cases of this disease opium, freely administered, at the commencement, will check vomiting, counteract the primitive irritation, and soothe all the unpleasant symptoms. Nevertheless, as a general rule, it will be found expedient, first to relieve the stomach of its irritating contents. For this purpose many practitioners adhere to the ancient plan of using diluent drinks, such as chamomile-tea, warm water, barley or chicken water, &c. in great quantities. Conceiving the disease to arise from acrid bile, they pursue the treatment for morbid poisons, pouring diluents into the stomach to wash away the offensive accumulations.

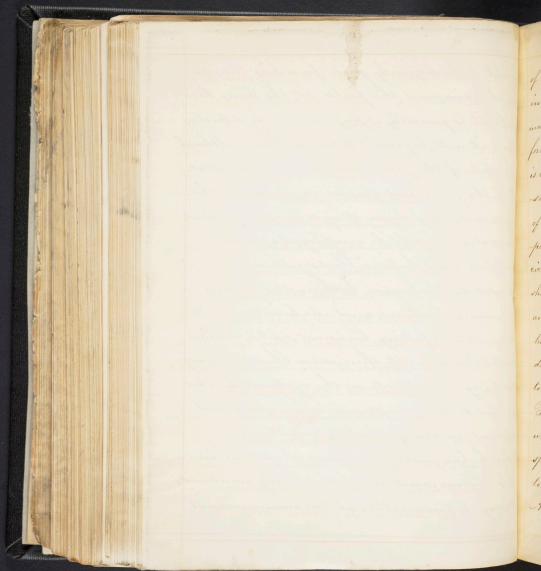


That this plan may, occasionally, prove successful, I have no doubt, but since emetics are more prompt, certain, and effectual in their operation, they should always be preferred. The best emetic for this purpose is ipecacuanha; twenty grains of which should be given, and its operation promoted by copious draughts of warm water, or chamomile-tea; this will usually have the effect of relieving the stomach and general system from oppression, promoting reaction, and equalizing excitement. Our next object is to calm the irritability of the stomach and remove the spasmodic pains. There are several remedies suited to this indication, of which blinding is the most important; but it should always be employed with circumspection, and in some cases, where there is high arterial action, and determination to the head, it should precede emetics. The state of the pulse however,



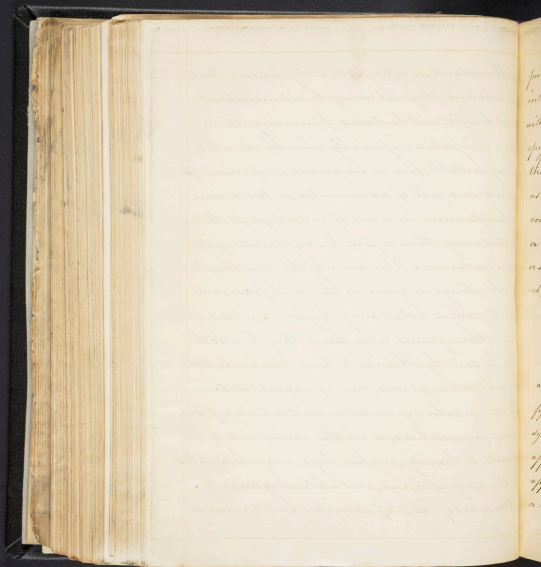
is not to be our only guide, for where there is much pain, and the pulse at the same time is feeble, it is generally oppressed, and by detaching blood it will be found to rise. Hence, although the state of the pulse may not seem to indicate it, if the pain and spasms are severe, and there is an ordinary degree of rigor in the patient, venesection should be employed. In all doubtful cases however, bleeding should be preceded by the warm bath, and on coming out, using frictions, and embrocating with some stimulating liniment, until reaction is established; and then draw blood, cautiously, watching its effects on the system. Leeches applied to the epigastrium is one of our most efficient means of checking vomiting.

Much has justly been said of opium in this disease, and as I have already mentioned, it may be given either at the commencement



of the attack, or after active depletion. But in whatever stage it may be administered, most benefit will be derived from using it in form of injection, especially where the stomach is very irritable; five or six grains of opium dissolved in a gill of warm water, or two drams of laudanum in a gill of mucilage, to be repeated every three or four hours, according to circumstances. When given by the mouth, it should always be given in the solid form; and an old pill is best: it may be given in doses of two or three grains, every two or three hours; the dose is said by Thomas, to have been increased to eight or ten grains, in very urgent cases.

To aid in calming irritation and relieving spasms, warm fomentations; as cloths wrung out of hot spirits or brandy, or clove bags, may be applied to the epigastrium, and abdomen generally. Also a cataplasm of camphor and opium or



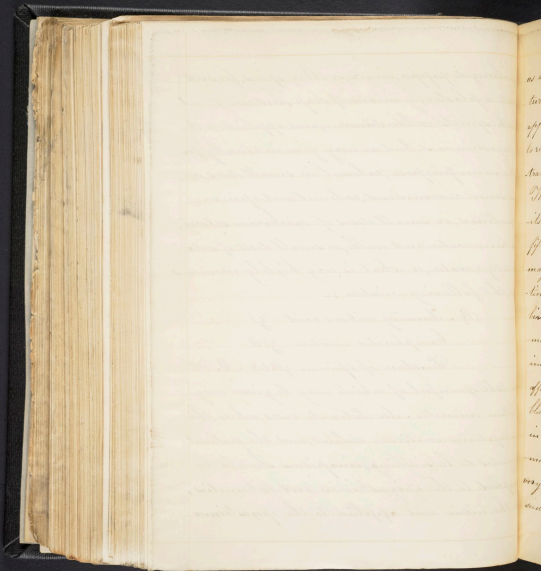
pulverized pepper, ginger, or other spices, formed into a plaster, by means of scap, and moistened with spirits or laudanum, and applied to the epigastrium. And we may give internally for the same purpose, calomel in small doses, or as some recommend, calomel and opium combined, or small doses of saccharum saturni, or lime water and milk, or small doses of soda or seltzer water, or what is very highly recommended, the following mixture:-

℞. Turning nitrous acid ℥i

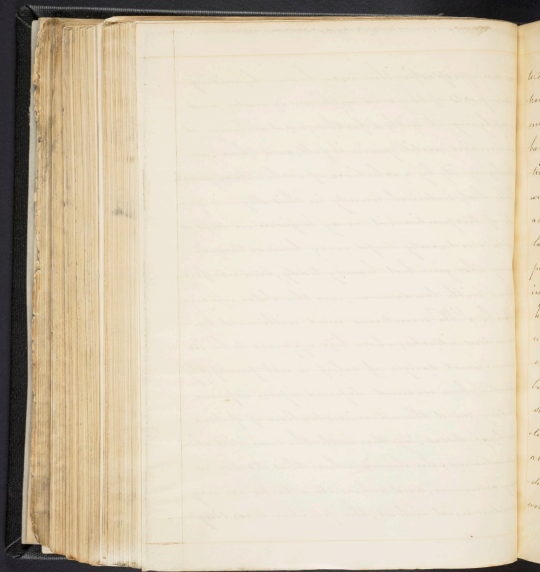
Camphorated mixture ℥viii

Tincture of opium qth. l. x. M.

a tablespoonful of which may be given every fifteen minutes. In obstinate cases, where the symptoms continue violent, and the patient appears to be sinking, sinapisms should be applied to the epigastrium and extremities, or the nitric acid applied to the epigastrium



as an epispastic, this may be done by mixing
two parts of the acid with one of water, and
applying it with a feather, and allowing it
to remain until pain is felt, and then neu-
tralizing it by a solution of carbonate of potash.
The best internal remedy in this stage is spi-
rits of turpentine: it may be given in doses of
fifteen or twenty drops every hour or two; we
may also give hot brandy toddy, and use fric-
tions with laudanum, over the abdomen and
limbs. We sometimes meet with most ter-
rible attacks, where life appears to be in
imminent danger if relief is not promptly
afforded; here we must depend upon copious
bleeding, and the administration of opium
in large doses, together with the remedies above
mentioned. In India where this disease is
very common, and where its attacks are very
sudden and violent, the practice according



to Johnson, is copious bleeding, followed by the adminis-
tration of twenty grains of calomel, combined with
one hundred drops of laudanum, aided by the warm
bath, siccapiens &c. In the M. Indis, some prac-
tice binding the patient down to a table, or board,
with straps, so that he cannot stir, and that the
abdominal muscles cannot act; and then give
laudanum. Hitherto I have said nothing of
purgatives in this disease, which I consider very
important remedies in every form of it; after we
have subdued, or allayed irritation, we should begin
with small doses of calomel; say two grains
every hour, until fifteen or twenty grains have
been taken, and then work it off with Epsom-
salts, or castor oil. This disease is liable to re-
turn; to obviate which, the patient should avoid
all exciting causes, or any means that have a ten-
dency to promote a relapse. Hamul should be
warm next the skin, and night air particularly avoided.

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The diet should be light and nutritious, the bowels kept in a soluble state, by the use of calomel, rhubarb, magnesia, or the neutral salts. To restore tone to the system, when the attack has been severe, bitters, as quassia, serpentaria, columbo &c. should be employed. The elixir of ipecac is also used with advantage, in doses of ten drops two or three times a day.

